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ABSTRACT

Using text, activities, cartoons, and prose, the publication encourages junior and senior secondary students to examine the history of colonialism in Africa and the importance of colonialism in Africa today. Chapter 1 provides an overview of 500 years of colonialism. Chapter 2 describes pre-colonial Africa from the year 1000 to 1442. The focus of chapters 3 and 4 includes the years from 1442 to 1833 when Africa became poor while Europe prospered. Chapter 5 describes colonialism from 1833-1884, and chapter 6 explains the dividing of Africa in 1884. Chapter 8 presents the patterns of colonialism from 1884-1967. Lingering colonialism in chapter 9 looks at the difficulties of African countries after 1960. Three case studies examine neocolonialism, the apartheid system in South Africa, and colonialism in Canada. Twenty activities in chapter 13 coincide with the chapter texts. A list of 11 audio-visual and print resources provides further information. (Author/CK)

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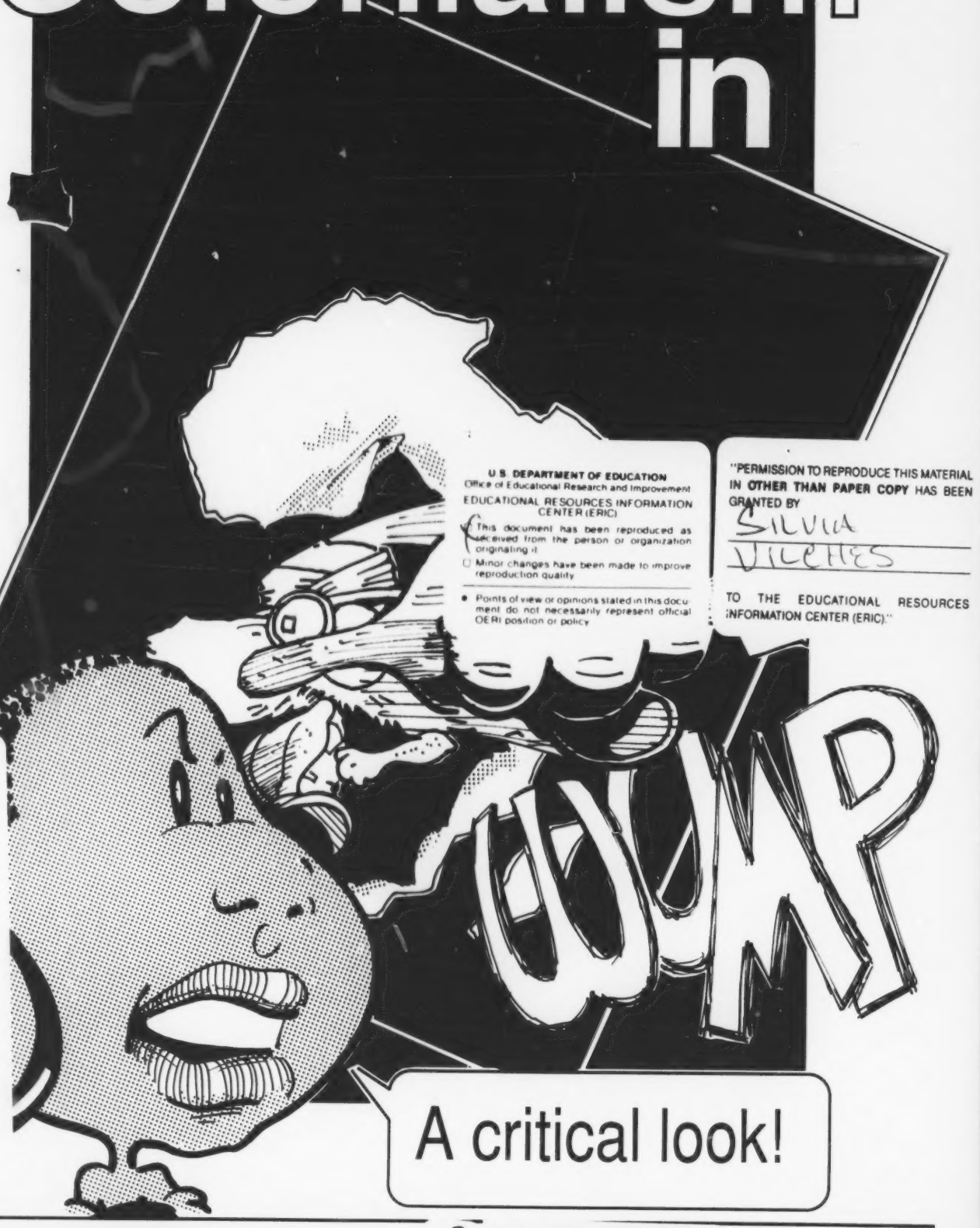

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Colonialism in Africa: A Critical Look

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To the Teacher:

On Colonialism and Perspective

Colonialism, in western societies, is generally taught as a necessary evil. Well yes, it's true that indigenous cultures were destroyed, and that people were killed in colonialism's first excesses . . . well yes, it's true that there were certain racist assumptions in the way colonized people were treated . . . BUT. And the buts were many: education, health, wiping-out of superstitious practices, the necessity to bring "underdeveloped"nations into the modern, industrialized world.

In Third World countries, the perspective is very different. Many Africans, colonized more recently than the rest of the Third World, still have stories carried down from their grandparents of how the white colonialists took the land by force, how an economy of sufficiency was displaced by scarcity, as the best lands went to raise crops for Europe, and the minerals extracted by sweating African miners were shipped raw to the refineries of Europe. Western visitors are often surprised by the anti-colonial bitterness amongst Africans, at their conviction that the development of their continent has been blighted and distorted by the patterns established during colonialism.

In the 1980s, as western television viewers watched with horror the sea of emaciated faces in Ethiopian refugee camps, as news of Africa's crushing debt and environmental disasters leaked into the western media, more and questions began to be asked about Africa's development. Colonialism, which had once been presented in a fairly benign light, began to be viewed more critically. Why all this hunger, this debt, in a land which had once been plentiful?

Scholars like Walter Rodney, in his book ***How Europe Underdeveloped Africa***, points out that the purpose of colonialism was not to develop the colonies, but to use the wealth of the colonies to develop Europe and North America, and that the "Third World" countries are all countries which have been colonized and had their wealth exploited by other nations.

In order to understand our modern world, with its growing gap between rich and poor nations, it is essential for students to understand the **structure** of colonialism, a structure which not only shaped history in the past, but which continues to shape it in the future. ***Colonialism in Africa: A Critical Look*** is designed to help students think critically about colonialism, and its continuing effects on the world.

On using this resource:

Colonialism in Africa: A Critical Look can be used in two ways:

- Pages 1 to 33 can be read by the students, and followed up with activities from the Hands On section;
- Activities can be assigned, and the text used as research material to help students complete the assignments.

Colonialism — a critical eye

1 looking backward

The World has had about 500 years of colonialism. Triumph or disaster...what's the verdict?

In 1492
Columbus sailed
The ocean blue.

Wow, that was 500 years ago! Just think . . . a super birthday party in 1992. 500 years of progress! Think of all the education and knowledge and stuff Columbus and the other explorers brought with them. Why, if Columbus hadn't landed in America in 1492, there'd hardly be any civilization in most of the world! I mean . . .

What are you talking about, man! Are you telling me that your ancestors were civilized but mine weren't? There were lots of civilized people all over the world before 1492: scientists observing, mathematicians formulating principles, sculptors sculpting, people living in harmony with the land.

1492 might be a great day for white people, but it was sure a disaster for all the people with brown or black or red skins!

What do you mean, a disaster?

Right, I'll try to explain. But just for a little while, you're going to have to forget you're living in Canada and try to see it through my eyes, through Third World eyes, OK?

Columbus "Discovers" America

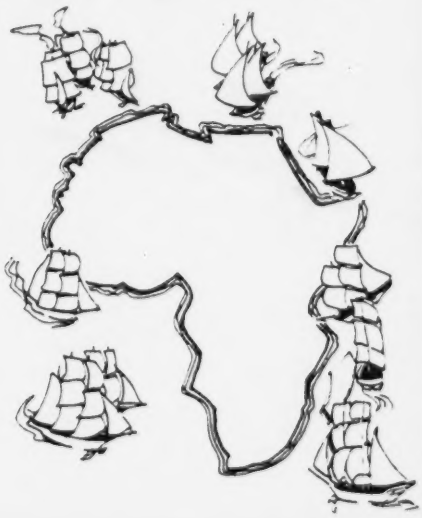
Let's start with Columbus. The very first island he landed on in the "New World" (new to him) was the island of Guanahiní, in the Bahamas. There he grabbed seven of the people and took them as slaves. On his second voyage, he captured 500 more. Says a lot for "civilization", eh?

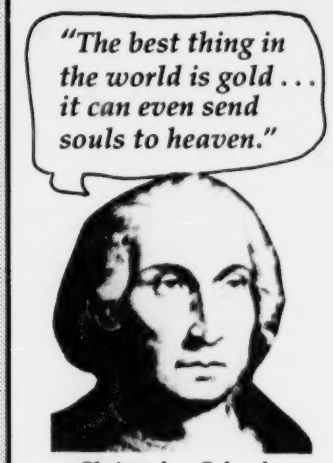
Also on that second voyage, Columbus had another brainwave. He introduced sugar cane to the islands of the Caribbean. Those islands, according to Columbus, didn't really belong to the people who lived on them. He stuck a Spanish flag on them and suddenly they belonged to Spain, and could be used as giant plantations to grow things for the people of Spain — in this case, sugar. What's more, the people on the islands could be used as slaves, to help cultivate the land. The native people didn't all see eye-to-eye with Columbus, and, before the Europeans were finished, there were very few of them left.

Native Indian Population of N. & S. America:

1492 .....80 million
1650 .....4 million

And this is where ***my*** ancestors, people from Africa, came in. With all those native Americans dead, who was going to raise the sugar cane? Not those Spanish nobles — they weren't going to get their hands dirty! They needed slaves who knew how to cultivate land, and they knew just where to find them! So while all those "civilized" folks from Spain were cracking the whips and firing the guns in North and South America and the Caribbean, more Europeans were spreading "civilization" to Africa.





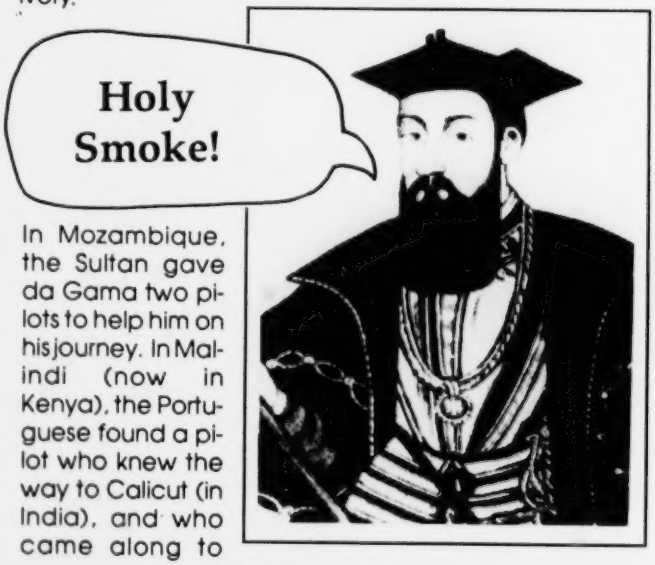
— Christopher Columbus

"The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such an infinite number of souls is that they have been moved by their wish for gold and their desire to enrich themselves in a very short time."

— Bartolomé de Las Casas, Spanish priest working among the Indians of South and Central America, 1542

Europe "discovers" Africa:

When Vasco da Gama — that famed Portuguese explorer — rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 and started up the coast of East Africa, he was amazed to find taller ships than he had ever seen before, and wealthy cities which carried on a brisk trade in gold and ivory.



In Mozambique, the Sultan gave da Gama two pilots to help him on his journey. In Malindi (now in Kenya), the Portuguese found a pilot who knew the way to Calicut (in India), and who came along to guide them. So da Gama's famed "passage to India" was helped along by Africans. In return for this, on his second journey, he looted and burned Mombasa, and threatened to burn Kilwa, another of East Africa's great cities, unless the Emir (or ruler) agreed to swear loyalty to King Manuel of Portugal, which he did.

The Portuguese who followed da Gama followed his example. They burned and looted Kilwa and other port cities of East Africa.

Now what? Let's take over this Africa-India trade ourselves!

The Portuguese then managed to prevent the Africans from continuing the trade with Asia.

Gone Up in Smoke:

Kilwa:

"a town with many fair houses of stone and mortar, very well arranged in streets . . . with doors of wood, well carved with excellent joinery"

(Description by Portuguese eyewitnesses, before they sacked and burned the city.)

Sacking Brava:

"This great town of very fine stone and mortar houses was destroyed by the Portuguese, who slew many of its people and carried many into captivity, and took great spoil of gold and silver and goods."

— Duarte Barosa, 1518

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2 early Africa

So what were all those "backward" Africans doing before the colonialists got there?

So you mean to say that East Africa had all these cities and trade and stuff before the white people arrived? Cool!

Listen, Eastern Africa wasn't the only part of Africa to develop beautiful cities and crafts. There were lots of powerful empires.

GHANA

Ghana: a kingdom built on riches from the salt and gold trade. Salt is so easy for us to buy that we forget how important it was to earlier people. In West Africa there was a high demand for salt, and the only salt deposits were far inland, in the Sahara desert. So salt was loaded onto long lines of camels and carried out through the desert sands to the coastal areas of West Africa. In return, the West Africans traded their treasure — gold. In the fifth century, the kings of Ghana and their lords began to tax this trade. According to al-Bakri, an 11th century traveller and writer, an amount of gold had to be paid for "every donkey-load of salt that enters the country" and on all goods going out.

The lords of Ghana threw huge, lavish parties. But they also encouraged the raising of new and different kinds of millet, rice and cotton, and improved on iron agricultural tools. Different kinds of cotton cloth were woven and traded. Better horses were bred, using Arabian horses imported from North Africa. Donkeys were bred to carry heavy loads.

The traders of Ghana were famous for their finely-tuned scales, with which they measured gold nuggets and dust.

MALI

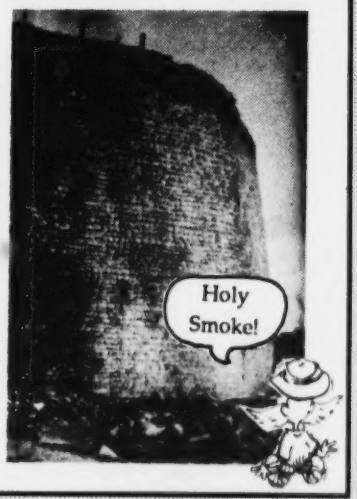
When the kingdom of Ghana was finally weakened and destroyed by invaders in the 13th century, its power was taken over by the Mandinka people, who were traders and farmers. Under their most famous king, Mansa Musa, the Mali kingdom expanded through trade. It became a centre of Muslim learning, with schools of law and theology in the cities of Timbuktu and Jenne. New architecture was brought from Arabia, and mosques were built of brick. Ibn Batuta, an early world traveller and writer, wrote in the 1350s that Mali was a well-run, secure kingdom. "Neither the man who travels nor he who stays at home has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence."

The Mali kingdom was followed by the Songhay kingdom, which developed a strong civil service, a professional army and navy, and extensive irrigation projects.

Wow!

and more

There were lots of other African kingdoms — the kingdom of Monomotapa in Zimbabwe, which left the ruins of massive stone palaces, the early Kingdom of Kush, famous before the time of Christ for its brasswork and iron mining and smelting, the early Christian kingdoms of Nubia and Axum (now Ethiopia), with their large decorated churches and monasteries.



A 16th Century Letter from Benin

"The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven or eight times broader than the Warmoes street in Amsterdam. . .

The king's palace is a collection of buildings which occupy as much space as the town of Harlem, and which is enclosed with walls. There are numerous apartments for the Prince's ministers and fine galleries, most of which are as big as those on the Exchange at Amsterdam. They are supported by wooden pillars encased with copper, where their victories are depicted, and which are carefully kept very clean.

The town is composed of thirty main streets, very straight and 120 feet wide, apart from an infinity of small intersecting streets. The houses are close to one another, arranged in good order. "

— a Dutchman in Benin, 16th Century

So how did the life of a European and the life of an African compare?

"Throughout the medieval period most African forms of government were undoubtedly more representative [democratic] than their European contemporaries; most African wars were less costly in life and property; and most African ruling groups were less predatory. So far as the comparison has any value, daily life in medieval Europe was likely to be far more hazardous or disagreeable for the common man and his wife."

— *Basil Davidson*

"Allowing for the difference between the Moslem and Christian intellectual climates, a citizen of 14th century Timbuktu would have found himself reasonably at home in 14th century Oxford. In the 16th century he still would have found many points in common between the two university cities. By the 19th century the gulf had grown very deep."

—*Thomas Hodgkin*

Think about it: What happened between 1500 and now to make Africa so poor and Europe and North America so rich?

3 slave trade

In which Africa becomes enmeshed in a nasty business—providing labour for Europe

Give me a dozen, please

1442: a young Portuguese captain landed in Morocco and captured 12 slaves, which he presented to Prince Henry of Portugal. Prince Henry was so excited he wrote to the Pope!

The Pope was pretty excited, too:

"I HEREBY GRANT, TO ALL WHO WANT TO ENGAGE IN THIS HOLY WAR, COMPLETE FORGIVENESS OF ALL THEIR SINS."

The slave trade between Africa and Europe started small.

1456: 1000 African slaves a year were arriving in Lisbon, Portugal, along with gold, peppercorn and ivory.

But this was just peanuts compared with what was to come!

July 1, 1501 — New Century Post

New World Needs New Workers!

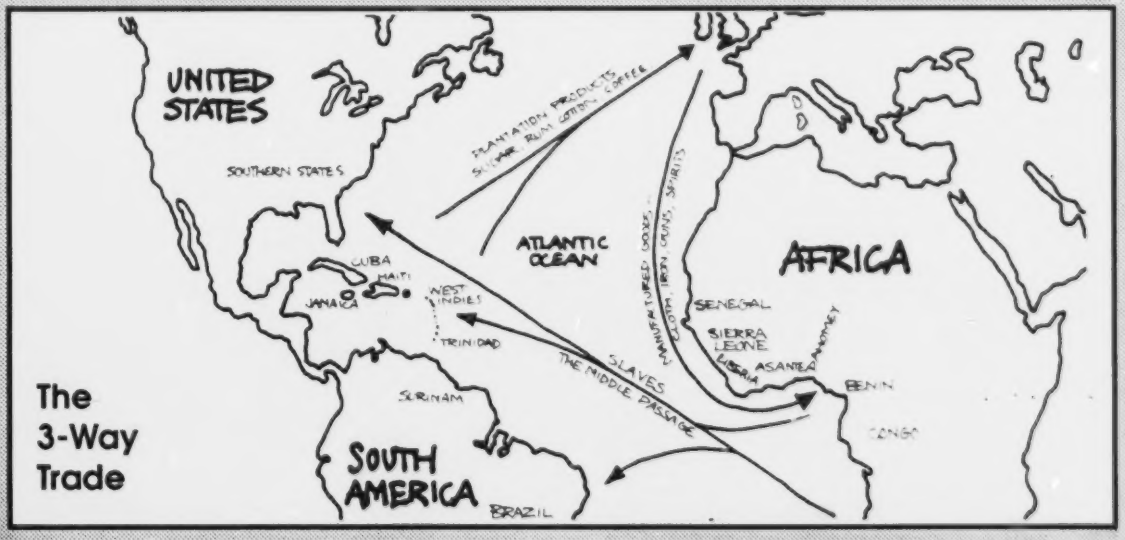
Now that the New World Indians have been hunted into the ground, new workers are needed to grow the sugar in New World plantations. What about all those Africans?

This question, raised in the house by Sir Anthony Hardwick....

The 3-Way Trade

1. England was launching into the Industrial Revolution. Manufacturers needed raw materials and markets.
2. The New World had lots of good land, but not many people.
3. Africa had people who were healthy, strong, and used to agricultural work.

Add up ①, ②, and ③, and you get the 3-Way Trade



The 3-Way Trade

A Great Triple Feature

It's as easy as ①, ②, ③!

① Slaves were shipped from West Africa to the islands of the West Indies, and later to the Southern United States.

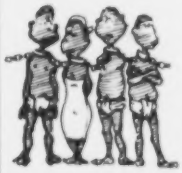
② Coffee, cotton, sugar and rum were shipped from those areas to Europe.

③ Manufactured products—especially guns—were shipped from England to West Africa, to pay for the slaves.

The European shippers did a great trade; their ships just kept going around in a triangle.

The European manufacturers were happy; they got their raw materials and their markets, too.

In fact, the only people who were complaining were the Africans!



It seems to me that the African leaders did very well out of the slave trade. If they didn't like it, why didn't they just refuse?

Some of the African leaders did resist, but they didn't get very far. . .

The Adventures of Agaja Trudo, King of Dahomey

1724: Let's rid our region of slavery. Attack the slave forts!

So he doesn't want to trade in slaves? Well, then, we won't trade for anything else. If he doesn't get any guns, he'll cave in soon enough!

1730: I give up! If I don't get more ammunition, my people will all be captured by other slave trading groups!

The Europeans would only trade guns for slaves. This meant that those groups which didn't trade slaves were sitting ducks, ready to be picked off by the groups that *did* have guns. This was known as the "slave-gun cycle".

Well, trading in slaves sounds pretty awful, all right, but did it really affect Africa?

Listen, the slave trade changed Africa from a self-sufficient, developing continent to a disaster area!

1. labour lost

How many Africans — most of them young adults — reached the West Indies or America? The latest research suggests that 12 million slaves arrived to work on European-run plantations. But of all the people captured, only one in four made it to the New World alive. Many died on the ships, or during the long chained march from the interior to the coast. So, all in all, Africa lost about 48 million people over 400 years. While Europe's population increased, Africa's decreased. Instead of helping develop Africa, African labourers were helping develop Europe.

2. trade & agriculture disrupted

Until the slave trade began, most of Africa was criss-crossed by trade routes. Caravans of donkeys or camels crisscrossed the continent, laden with cloth, ivory, gold, iron implements, salt. When the trade routes became filled with roving gangs out to collect slaves, smart traders stayed at home. Trade slowly cranked down. Agriculture was also put on hold. The Europeans actively discouraged any occupation which might distract the Africans from collecting slaves. The whole of the African continent became a battleground, as tribal groups raided each other for slaves, using the guns brought by the Europeans.

Stop All This Cotton-Picking Cultivation!

In 1751, the governor of Cape Castle, West Africa, was encouraging the Africans to grow cotton. He soon received a stop order from the British Board of Trade:

"The introduction of culture and industry among the Negroes is contrary to the known established policy of this country, there is no saying where this might stop, and that it might extend to tobacco, sugar and every other commodity which we now take from our colonies [in the "New World"]; and thereby the Africans, who now support themselves by wars, would become planters."

3. industries squeezed

Local craft industries couldn't compete with cheap European goods, and many went out of business. African cloth, famous for its strength and beauty, was replaced with machine-made British cloth, traded — along with the guns — for slaves.

Think about it:
What would Britain's development have been like if millions of Britons had been forced to work as slaves outside of Britain for 4 centuries?

Making Europe Rich

4 Europe prospers

While African development goes backwards, thanks to the Europeans, European development progresses well, thanks to the Africans.

The British Courier — June 15, 1756

BANKING ON THE SLAVE TRADE

A group of investors who have become rich from the slave trade with Africa today announced that they were about to open a new bank in London. We can lend out

July 1, 1776 — The Post

STEAMING AHEAD

Mr. James Watt today exhibited his new steam engine to a group of gentlemen in business and science. "This engine will lead to more wealth for Britain!" he informed his audience. Mr. Watt was helped in producing the steam engine by Mr. Matthew Boulton and other investors who had been successful in the African slave trade. "Capital from our trade with Africa is now being invested in the production of new types of machinery," explained Mr. Boulton. "Britain is truly forging ahead,

September 20, 1765

Taylor & Lloyd Open Their Doors

London is to have a new bank! The announcement was made yesterday by a group of investors seeking a sure-fire investment opportunity. "We had all made money from the West Indian trade," explained Mr. Lloyd, one of the primary partners, "and we were looking for a good place for this money to grow."

As well as helping to make Europeans rich and Africans poor, the slave trade introduced another problem to the world — **racism**.

Racism:
Drawing the World in Black and White

Think about it:

- You are responsible for taking millions of people forcibly from their homeland, and putting them to work — at no pay — to make YOU rich.
- The conditions of transportation and of work are so dreadful that many of these people die.

Question:

How will you explain these actions, and continue to feel like the good Christian you believe yourself to be?

Some Answers:

"It's not as if they're like white people. They don't have the same feelings!"

"These people can't take care of themselves. They're like children."

"They're so backward and uncivilized. We're doing them a favour bringing them civilization! This is the white man's burden."

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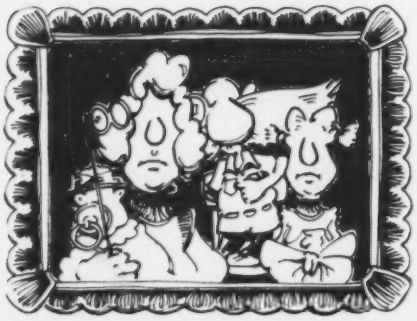
Taking Over

5 enter colonialism

Once Europeans accepted racism, it was easy to get to the next stage in African history.

Up until the 1800s, what had been happening in Africa could be called ***imperialism***. Imperialism is when one nation has control over another, and Europe certainly had quite a bit of control over the affairs of Africa. But that control stopped short of ***colonialism*** — the out-and-out political takeover of one nation by another. But in the mid to late 1800s, everything changed.



STAGE 1: 1833 — THE SLAVE TRADE ENDS

In England, people were getting sick of the slave-trade for a number of different reasons, and parliament finally stopped it.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

"This is a disgrace to Christendom! Slavery should be stopped!"

What we need now that we're manufacturing all these goods with our machines is more raw materials and more people to buy our goods. We'd be better off getting raw materials from Africa and selling our manufactured goods to the Africans."

The slaves are always revolting; we'd be better off paying them a bit.

Well, thank goodness the slave trade ended!

But Africa didn't have very long to recover from the slave trade before the next stage hit.

STAGE 2: THE STRUGGLE TO BE #1

I'm going to be the most powerful!

I'm the greatest!

I'm the boss around here!

I'm number 1 — the champ!

STAGE 3: PINNING DOWN RAW MATERIALS & MARKETS

If I can just get a chunk of Africa to produce raw materials for my industries, I'll be set!

If I don't get a piece of Africa, the other guys will get all the raw materials!

Guess what! Scientists have just discovered quinine. That means I can send my people to rule a chunk of Africa, and they won't drop dead of malaria!

The African traders are demanding high prices for their produce. Why don't we just take the place over?

Illustration: New Internationalist

STAGE 4: THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE EXPLORER

The Richmond Rag — March 1870

SENSATIONAL STANLEY IN DARKEST AFRICA

The intrepid explorer Henry Morton Stanley sets out into the dense African jungle, with nothing but a machete and his courage to guide him. "I am determined to discover the heart of the dark continent," remarked this brave explorer as he set out into the wilderness with nothing but his

The ***real*** story looked more like this:

The Great White Explorer (with a little help from his friends)

But these explorers didn't just explore. They grabbed huge pieces of Africa, getting "permission" from African chiefs by bribery or by force.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE: Amazing Annexationist

Sir George Goldie, director of the United African Company, was determined to make West Africa into a British colony. He hired agents to go into the interior and make treaties with the African chiefs. (It didn't concern Sir George that in Africa, since land is owned communally by the whole village, the chiefs had no more right to sell the land than the Mayor of Vancouver would have to sell Vancouver.) Those chiefs who resisted were "persuaded" by Sir George's 20 gunboats, which roamed up and down the Niger River.

Meanwhile, explorers like Henry Stanley was staking out areas and "persuading" chiefs for King Leopold of Belgium, and others for Germany and France. The race was on to see which European countries could get the most!

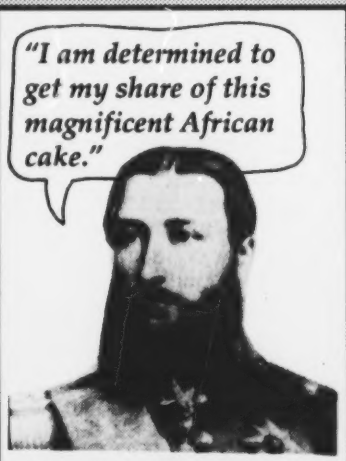
The Land Grab

6 dividing Africa

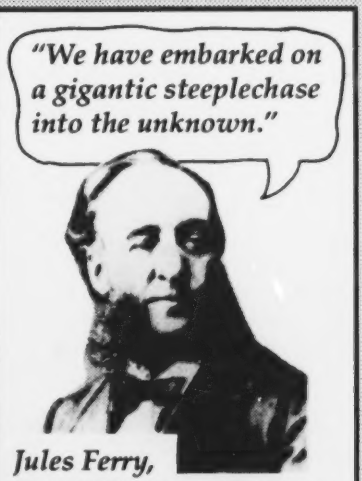
In which the European countries divide Africa into bits and share out the pieces

Most of the European countries got into the act. Everyone wanted to have a bit of Africa!

Finally, in 1884-85, they had a conference — The Berlin African Conference. They drew up guidelines on which European country could have which bits of Africa. By 1914, all of Africa had been parcelled out to European countries, except for Ethiopia, which won a major battle against Italy in 1896, and Liberia, which was inhabited by freed slaves.



King Leopold of Belgium



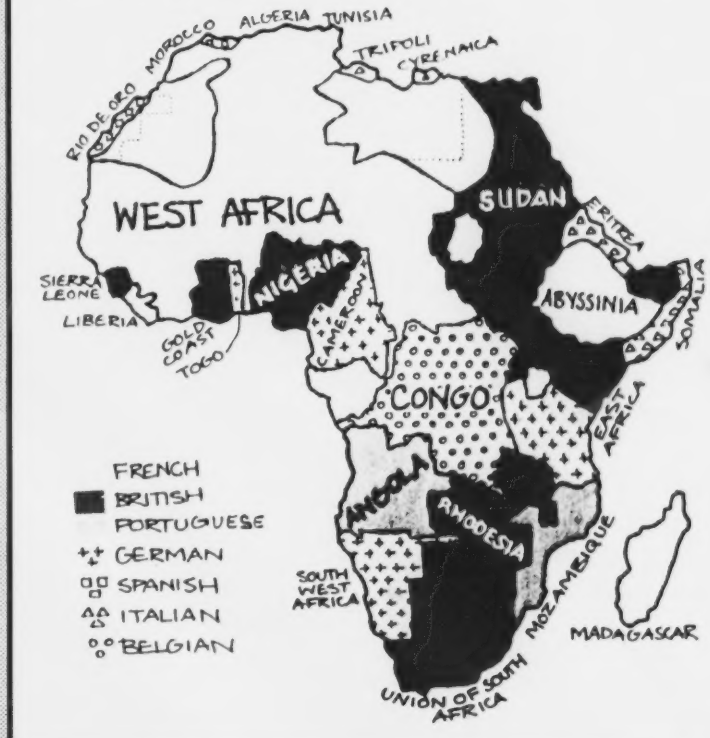
Jules Ferry, Prime Minister of France

Africa in 1914:

How Much Belonged to Whom

	Square miles
France	4,086,950
Britain	3,701,411
Germany	910,150
Belgium	900,000
Portugal	787,500
Italy	600,000
Spain	79,800
Independent (Liberia, Ethiopia)	393,000
TOTAL	11,458,811

Africa after the Scramble



Graphic: Teaching Development Issues: Colonialism, Cooke

How could Africans let this happen? How could outsiders move in and simply take over the continent?

There were a lot of different reasons.

- Africa was divided. Often, a leader would cooperate with the Europeans against a neighbouring rival, not realizing that the Europeans were more dangerous that African rivals.
- Africa was weakened by centuries of the slave trade, and many of the chiefs had already become used to cooperating with the Europeans during the slave trade.

GUNS OF GLORY

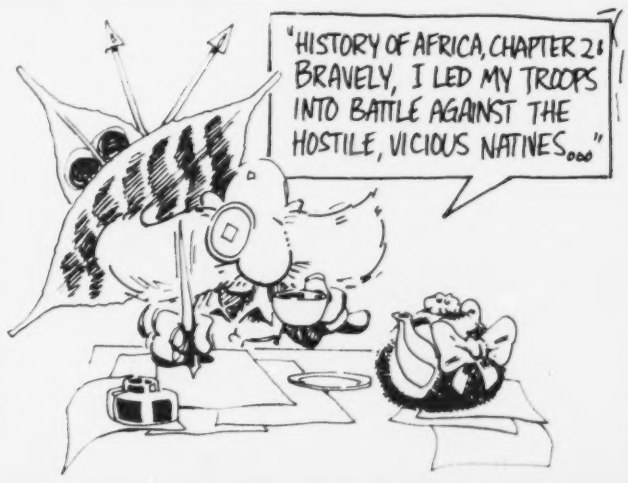
But the main reason was that might equalled right. The Europeans had developed the Gatling and Maxim machine guns, which could fire ten shots per second. They had been careful not to sell any of these new repeating guns to Africans. And they were willing to kill off lots of Africans to get their way.

RESISTANCE

Despite European gunpower, there was fierce resistance in many parts of Africa. The occupation of Africa took 25 years. And many of the resistance fighters are still remembered as great heroes by the Africans: leaders like Samori Touré of Guinea, Bai Burch of Sierra Leone, Mkwawa of Tanzania. . .

How come I've never heard about any African resistance leaders?

Think about who writes history. When did you last read a history of Canada written by a native Canadian?



WHY WE TOOK OVER AFRICA

"I have a duty to help save the heathen from damnation, wean them from their perversity, and open the gates to a Christian civilisation"
— Mary Slessor, Scottish missionary

"Take up the White Man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go, bind your sons in exile
To serve your captive's need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild,
Your new-caught, sullen peoples
Half-devil and half-child."
— Rudyard Kipling, British Poet

"The most useful function which the colonies perform is to supply the mother country's trade with a ready-made market, to get its industry going and maintain it, and to supply the inhabitants of the mother country with increased profits, wages or commodities."
— Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, Professor of Moral and Political Science, College de France, 1871

Patterns of Colonialism

7 after the landgrab

How the Europeans ran Africa — and what effect this has on Africa now

For the next 100 years, Europeans ran Africa. My grandparents grew up knowing that they weren't even in charge of their own country! And the way the Europeans ruled ... we're still having problems!

Problem 1: DUMB DIVISION Where to Draw the Line

If you were given the job of dividing up a continent, you'd probably try to find out some information about the people who lived there: what languages they spoke, what tribal groups they belonged to. Not the Europeans! They divided up cultural groups and put traditional enemies together in the same country.

"We've been engaged in drawing lines on maps where no man's foot has ever trod. We've been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where we were."

— Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister of Britain

Think about it:

What effect might this "dumb division" have on Africa today?

Problem 2: The GOODS GRAB Introducing Cash Crops

Most African farmers were satisfied to live in their villages and grow the crops they'd always grown: maize, sorghum, cassava. But that's not what the Europeans wanted; nobody in Europe wanted to eat sorghum. So how could they make people produce what Europeans wanted?

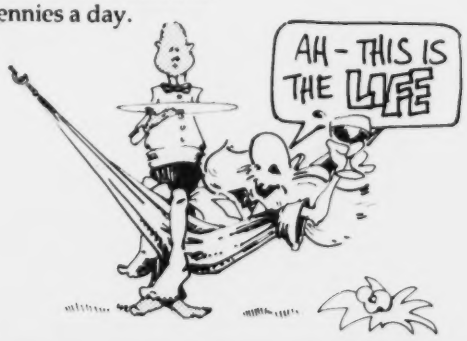
Strategy A: The machete approach, by King Leopold of Belgium

The Belgian Congo

In the Congo under King Leopold companies were granted rights to large areas of land, including rights to work the people. From 1895 to 1905, the companies went wild; bicycles and cars were becoming popular, and they were getting top prices for rubber. If people didn't gather enough rubber, they had hands or feet chopped off. From 1885 to 1908, the population of the Congo was cut in half (from 20 million to 10 million). People either died or fled to neighbouring countries, where things weren't quite as bad.

Strategy B: The land-snatching approach, from East and Southern Africa

If white people took over the land, they would ensure crops for the home country. In Kenya, for instance, Lord Delamere bought 100,000 acres of land for 1 cent an acre. His friend, Lord Francis Scott, managed to get 350,000. Most of this was planted in coffee, to be drunk by people in Britain. What happened to the people who had lived on all that land? They now got to work for Lord Delamere and Lord Scott for a few pennies a day. Or, in Southern Africa, they could go to the mines and work there for a few pennies a day.



Strategy C: The taxation approach, all over Africa

Taxation was one of the best approaches of all, as far as the colonialists were concerned. They imposed taxes. And taxes had to be paid in money. And Africans didn't have money; they were used to trading directly for things they needed. So the only way to get money was to grow the crop demanded by the Europeans (coffee, cotton, cocoa) and sell it.

This approach had the added advantage of providing taxes to pay all the European administrators, the army and the police. So the farmers paid the money to finance their own colonization!

What all of these approaches left Africa with was a **monoculture** economy.

Monoculture, what's that? Sounds like a disease!

Well, you're not far off. Monoculture is the growing of a single crop. And it could be called the disease of colonialism.

Monoculture: The Colonial Disease

Monoculture: that means growing mainly one crop. When the colonialists came, African farmers grew a variety of crops — yams, sorghum, rice, plantain — to feed themselves a balanced diet. They were self-sufficient in food. But the colonialists decided that Gold Coast should grow cocoa, and Senegal should grow peanuts. The countries could use the money that they made from their ***commodity*** (that's another name for a raw material) to buy imported food and manufactured goods shipped from Europe.

What's wrong with that? In B.C. we sell our raw logs to Japan and import food from California and Mexico.

Well, it all depends on how much money you get for your commodities. And guess who sets the prices? It's sure not the farmers!

Think about it:

Producing just a few raw commodities might lead to trouble later on. Can you think what that trouble might be?

Problem 3: GRABBING THE CASH
Shipping the Resources Back "Home"

Colonialism was a great get-rich-quick scheme — for the colonialists, that is.

Great Money-Making Schemes:

1. Buy minerals and crops cheap from the Africans, then sell them back in Europe for high prices.
2. Buy manufactured goods cheap from Europe, and sell at high prices to the Africans.
3. Buy a shipping company, and charge high rates.
4. Pay low, low, low wages to African workers.
5. Collect high taxes.

While the Africans worked away to produce crops and to mine minerals for the Europeans, the Europeans used the profits to build new buildings, finance new industries, and research new inventions.

"I saw for myself the massive palaces, museums and other public buildings paid for by Congo ivory and rubber."

— an African in Brussels

Resource Rip-Off #1
Northern Rhodesia (Now Zambia)

Expenditures and Output of Mining Industry in N. Rhodesia (in thousand pounds)

1. European salaries, wages, bonuses	£4,100
2. African wages and bonuses	1,400
3. African rations	600
4. Payments to contractors	1,000
5. Payments to Rhodesia Railways	1,800
6. Income Tax and Customs	3,600
Total expenditure	£12,500
Gross value of output	£36,742

(Source: P. Deane, Colonial Social Accounting, cited in Stavrianos)

So what do all those numbers mean?

Well, out of £36.7 million that was made out of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), £24.2 million was sent back to England, to make the shareholders there rich. Of the money that was spent in Northern Rhodesia, less than £2 million went to the African workers (who earned one-eleventh as much as a white worker).

Resource Rip-Off #2
Chunya, Tanganyika
(holes instead of gold)

1933-1953: The British mined gold as fast as they could.

1953: The gold is all gone. Chunya is now one of the most backward spots in the whole of Tanganyika, itself a very poor country.
(Tanganyika is now part of Tanzania)

Think about it:
All this shipping-out of resources and money — what effect might this have on African countries today?

Problem 4: STEAMING AHEAD
Building Trains and Roads

And then there were the railways — one of the greatest achievements of the empire.

Well, at least the colonialists did one thing right!

So who **really** built the railways, and who were they for?

Sierra Leone
1916: a 500 kilometer railway from Freetown to Pendembu is completed. It was built almost entirely with forced African labour.

Congo (now Zaire)
1921 - 1933: the Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire Railway is completed. Each year 10,000 people were forced to the site to work, and every year at least 25% of the workforce died from starvation or disease.

And where did the railways go to?
The railways all had one thing in common: they ran to the sea. That's because they weren't meant for trade with other parts of Africa. Their purpose was to get the crops and minerals to the seaport, so that they could be shipped straight to Europe. And the railways weren't the only thing that was set up that way; a mail strike in France would mean that the French colonies couldn't communicate with each other, because all their mail had to go through Paris.

Think about it:
How might the lack of communication and trade routes between African countries affect them later?

Say, I don't get it. The colonialists don't seem to be able to do anything right!

Hey, you haven't seen anything yet. Not only did they change the economy and the transportation — they even started mucking up the way the people organized themselves!

Problem 5: ELEVATING THE ELITE
Turning out Black Colonialists

How could the Europeans rule all those Africans, with just a few white administrators and soldiers? They used the system already in place, getting the local headmen to become tax collectors or minor administrators. Africans were used to communal decision-making. The headman was important, but he would have to listen to everyone in the community before he made a decision. Once the colonialists came, all of that was changed. The headman was responsible for nasty jobs like collecting taxes to give to the Europeans. He became cut off from his people, and simply carried out the orders of the colonialists. In the French colonies, this local elite (or ruling class) was called the ***Beni Oui Oui*** (the "Yes, Yes men").

Although very few Africans got an education, the Europeans made sure that the sons of the *Beni Oui Oui* got to school, and became "Europeanized" Africans.

Think about it:

Are there any ways in which this elite might affect Africa in the future?

Problem 6: IMPORTING SEXISM
Making African Women Invisible

Before colonialism, my grandmothers were pretty powerful people! If you inherited something, you inherited it from your mother. Women were important political figures; sometimes they would be "Queen Mother", or "Queen Sister", and the kings would have to ask their advice on anything important. Land was owned by the whole community and men and women farmed together, with equal rights.

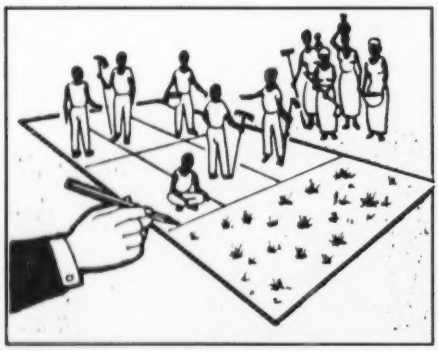


Illustration: New Internationalist

When the colonialists came, all that changed. When the Europeans gave out little plots of land, they forgot about the women. Then they often sent the men off to work in the mines, or on plantations. Men began to have money for their work, while women worked in the fields to raise food for their children. All of a sudden, men's work was "important" and "modern", and women's work was "traditional" and "backward".

Think about it:

How might the low status of women affect African development later?

Problem 7: HIDING HISTORY
The "West is Best" Mentality

When the Europeans took over, they let everyone know that everything European was correct, advanced, and "civilized", and everything African was backward and uncivilized. They educated Africans in European languages, and taught them European history. Young Africans learned nothing of their own history, art or literature.

Think about it:
What effect will the "west is best" mentality have later?

So, all in all, colonialism was a DISASTER.

"Africans, who once raised all the food they needed for themselves, now produced commodities for Europe."

"The continent was divided up in ways that didn't make sense for the people who lived there."

"Africa lost her traditional industries, and was prevented from starting new ones."

"Africans were forced to build railways and telegraph lines in directions which helped European businessmen, but not Africans."

"The African "top dogs" (sometimes called the elite) lost touch with the common people in the country."

"The Africans were told that "west is best" so often that they even started to believe it!"

"Women lost their land rights and their status."

"Well, at least we brought them education!"

You mean you brought ***European*** education to Africa. African children had always been taught agriculture, crafts, and traditions. They had learned about cooperation, rather than competition.

Even as far as European education went, you colonialists didn't do too well:

- At independence, Mozambique had 2 doctors and a dozen typists.
- The Belgian Congo (now Zaire) had 13 college graduates when it became independent.
- By 1958, Northern Rhodesia, with an African population of 2 million, had only one secondary school offering graduation certificates.

Struggling for Freedom

8 getting independence

How African countries went from being colonies to being independent nations

So how did all these African countries stop being colonies?

In most cases, they only stopped being colonies after a long struggle. Those Europeans were on to a good thing, and they didn't give up without a fight!

Africans Struggling for Independence

World War I: Hundreds of thousands of Africans are sent to fight in Europe to help their European masters win the war. 46,000 Kenyans are killed fighting for Britain. France sends off 211,000 West Africans, many of whom are killed. When the war is over, the survivors are sent home, to continue working the fields. Discontent grows:

> ***If African volunteers are good enough to fight and die for the Empire's cause, they're good enough . . . to have a share in the government of their countries.***
> — Gold Coast Independent Newspaper, 1921

After World War II: The fight for independence grows:

"During the war, thousands of us African soldiers risked our lives, and European soldiers got higher pay and more privileges! I'm sick of this!

• **1945:** the members of the Fifth Pan-African Congress gather in Manchester. They include Kwame Nkrumah, later president of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta, later president of Kenya, a representative of Nnamdi Azikiwe, later president of Nigeria.

"It's time for independence."

"If Asian colonies such as India, Burma and Ceylon can be free, why not African countries?"

The Final Struggle

From 1945 on there were uprisings, shootings, imprisonments, but finally

INDEPENDENCE

1951 — Libya
1952 — Egypt
1956 — Sudan
1957 — Ghana
1960 — Nigeria
...and more!

1957 to 1967 is Africa's "Birthday Decade". 32 African countries became independent.
The most recent country to receive its independence is Namibia, whose long struggle with South Africa finally ended on November 7, 1989, when Namibia had its first elections.

Lingering Colonialism

9 after independence

African countries find that the patterns of colonialism are not easy to change

It wasn't until after they'd been independent for awhile that most African countries discovered that the ghost of colonialism still lingered on!

Problem 1: DUMB DIVISION
What's the Aftermath?

If you attended one of Nigeria's many boarding schools, the first question you might be asked is "What tribe are you from?" You would be asked the question in English, which would be your second or third language, because English is the only language by which people from all areas of Nigeria can communicate. Nigeria has over 300 languages. Your tribe would be very important to you, perhaps more important than your country.

In 1967, there was a terrible war between the Ibo people in the south and the rest of the country. The Ibos wanted to break away and form their own country. They saw themselves as Ibo first and Nigerians second. It took three years of fighting before the Ibo were defeated. Nigeria is only one African country which has had conflict and war between different groups of people. From 1945 to 1989, sub-Saharan Africa had 30 major military conflicts.

Crazy! Why should all these groups fight just because they're from different tribal groupings?

Well, take a look at Canada (or Ireland, or Eastern Europe) if you want to see some closer struggles.

Problem 2: THE GOODS GRAB
You can't eat cotton

Many African countries still operate as they did in colonial times. They use up most of their land to grow one or two commodities, and then have to import food and manufactured goods. This would be OK if they got good prices for commodities, but in 1987 the prices for things like jute, coffee and copper were the lowest they'd been in 30 years.

But that's not all. While the prices of commodities have gone **down**, the price of manufactured things — things that are made in factories, like machinery parts and tractors — have all gone **up**. Africans are getting poorer and poorer, and hungrier and hungrier. We've all heard a lot about African famine, but think about this: while Ethiopians were starving by the thousands, fresh beans were being loaded on an airplane at Ethiopia's international airport to be sent to Europe.

The Cost of Cocoa

Next time you drink a cup of cocoa, think about where it comes from. Over 46% of Ghana's money comes from selling raw cocoa. Have a look at these figures, and see what's happened to the price of cocoa. Think about what that means for farmers in Ghana.

Cocoafacts

Top five exporters of cocoa in 1986 (% of total world exports)

Ivory Coast	32
Ghana	15
Nigeria	9
Brazil	9
Malaysia	6

Price of cocoa on world market (per metric ton, year's average)

1977	$3,789
1982	$1,742
1984	$2,396
1989	$1,174*

* Spot price September 1989

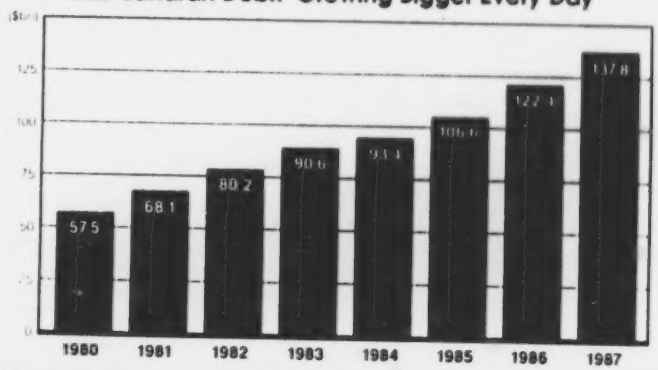
The Debt Trap

The African governments — often following the advice of western experts — borrowed a lot of money to build new schools, hospitals and factories — all the things that the colonialists hadn't built. They thought they could pay the money back, because they were producing lots of commodities.

But then —

Commodity prices went down, down, down. The governments had no money to pay the debt, but they keep trying to pay at least the interest. The result? Africans are poorer than ever.

Sub-Saharan Debt: Growing Bigger Every Day



Problem 3: THE CASH GRAB
Leaving Africa with the Holes

When African countries gained their independence, what did they have? Very few schools or hospitals, and almost no factories of any kind. Supposing some of the money from copper mined in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) had been used to build a copper refinery in Northern Rhodesia. That would have helped the Zambians to develop. People could have got jobs in the refinery, and other people could have taken the refined copper and made other things with it — copper pots and jewelry. That would have meant more jobs. Instead, the copper was shipped out raw to Britain, where British workers got the jobs. Now Zambian copper is running out, and Zambia is still a poor country with few industries.

Meanwhile, more and more Africans move to the city to try to find jobs. Thirty million Africans are out of work, and 95 million are under-employed, out of a total population of 661 million. Without industries, there aren't many jobs.

But why didn't Africans go ahead and set up their own industries?

1920: Uganda

Ugandans attempt to buy a cotton gin, to process their raw cotton. The British colonialists establish a commission to look into cotton gins. They decide that only Europeans and Indians may own gins — no Africans.

1927: Senegal

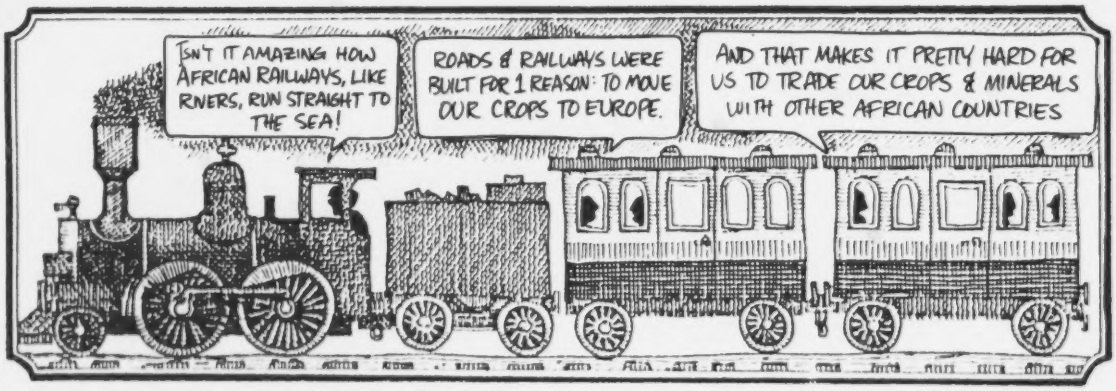
Africans build a mill to make peanut oil. The French oil-millers complain. "We need the business! These Africans shouldn't be allowed to make peanut oil!" The French colonialists close down the African mills.

1931: East Africa

A new law makes it illegal for banks to lend money to Africans.

The resource-grab policies of the colonialists mean a lack of industry, and high unemployment, today.

Problem 4: STEAMING AHEAD: Which way do the trains go?


ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW AFRICAN RAILWAYS, LIKE RIVERS, RUN STRAIGHT TO THE SEA!
ROADS & RAILWAYS WERE BUILT FOR 1 REASON: TO MOVE OUR CROPS TO EUROPE.
AND THAT MAKES IT PRETTY HARD FOR US TO TRADE OUR CROPS & MINERALS WITH OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

African countries are trying to trade with each other and support each other more, but it's a long, hard process, because none of the roads or trains go the right way for African trade.

Problem 5: AFRICA'S ELITE The Iron Fist

The famous black historian, Walter Rodney, wrote:

"Any diagnosis of underdevelopment in Africa will reveal not just low ... income and protein deficiencies, but also the gentlemen who dance in Abijan, Accra and Kinshasa when music is played in Paris, London and New York."

1988 — Gabon:
President Omar Bongo steps into his private plane, a specially decorated luxury DC-8. He has just spent $3 million to redecorate it, putting in a $720,000 cinema. Part of the money came from a special aid fund from the French government. Meanwhile, only 50% of the people of Gabon have safe drinking water, and the average life expectancy is 49 years.

1990 — Zaire:
President Mobutu Sese Seko, billionaire, lands in an airstrip specially lengthened to fit his chartered supersonic Concorde. Mobutu receives almost $100 million a year directly from his government to spend as he wants. This is more than the government spends on education, health and all other social services combined.

Africa's rich rulers were often trained by the colonialists, and kept in power by Western governments. The U.S., for instance, helps keep Mobutu in power because Zaire is an important military location, and the U.S. wants a "friend in power". This policy means wealth for a few Africans, but poverty for many.

Problem 6: IMPORTING SEXISM
Africa's Invisible Women

When you hear the words **African Farmer**, what picture do you see? Probably a man. Yet in Africa, most of the farmers are women. Women grow 75% of the food crops, raising food for their families. The men farmers concentrate on the cash crops which will bring in money. In countries like Kenya, it is the women who work together to plant trees and pile up rocks to prevent soil erosion. Yet women don't own their own land, and can't get any loans to help them buy seeds or fertilizers. The result? Erosion of the land, and hunger.

Problem 7: "WEST IS BEST"
The Colonial Hangover

Tractors are better than hoes, right? Big dams are better than little dams, right? When African countries became independent, they still relied on Western advice. Often, they went heavily into debt, borrowing money to build giant dams and buy expensive machinery. Most of these projects haven't worked out. African soil is very fragile, and tractors often quickly change the soil into a dustbowl. Age-old agricultural methods which preserved the land were ignored, and new "modern" methods used instead. The result? Environmental disaster and debt.

FAMINE TODAY IN ETHIOPIA. FIGHTING IN RWANDA... CORRUPTION IN IVORY COAST. AFRICAN DEBT SOARS... AFRICAN CHILDREN STARVING...
Africa is going through a terrible time right now.
It sure is. And one of the BIG reasons is colonialism. It's going to take a lot of work to change the patterns set long ago!

Continuing Colonialism — Case 1

10 south africa

Where the colonialists hold on to the reins of power

All this stuff in the news about South Africa — what's it all about?

What happened in South Africa, man, was that the colonialists never went home.

Here to Stay: The Roots of Apartheid

The Dutch East India Company, on its long trip from Holland to Asia, had a problem: they kept running out of fruit and vegetables.

So in 1652 they dropped Jan de Riebeeck off at the Cape of Good Hope:

Jan and the other farmers that came later didn't do well. In fact, they came close to starving. Then one of them came up with a great idea:

And that was just the beginning! Before South Africa's history was through, both the Dutch and English had been in charge. Modern South Africa consists of 4,400,000 white people who control 26,000,000 Africans, "Coloureds" (mixed race people) and Indians. Most of the wealth and the good land are in the hands of the whites, the descendents of Jan de Riebeeck & friends.

Apartheid

The word apartheid comes from the Afrikaner word "apartness", a philosophy of separating the races. When we think of apartheid, we often think of buses and washrooms designated "for whites only" or racially separate schools. Right now, South Africa is reforming a lot of these laws, and blacks and whites mingle more freely.

Great! You mean apartheid is just about over?

Well, there's still a long way to go. Many of the cornerstones of apartheid are still in place.

SOUTH AFRICAN FACTS

AREA: 1,221,037 sq. km.
(Compare to Canada: 9,976,139 sq. km.; B.C.: 948,596 sq. km.)
87% of South Africa's land is reserved for whites, 13% for Africans.

POPULATION:

Total	African	White	Coloured	Indian
30,780,000	22,500,000	4,400,000	3,000,000	880,000

(Compare to Canada's population — 25,309,331)

WAGES IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES: (Average monthly in Can. dollars)

Industry	Africans	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
Mining	$306	$1,646	$507	$814
Manufacturing	$377	$1,522	$430	$542
Agriculture	$33-$47	n/a	n/a	n/a

It was recently estimated that 75% of all African families in the rural areas live below the Poverty Datum Line — the minimum income that a family can live on.

EDUCATION:

Per capita spending on education (1980-81):

Africans	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
$200	$1,315	$365	$737

Teacher/Pupil Ratios:

Africans	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
1/48	1/18	1/27	1/24

HEALTH:

Infant mortality rate (the number of babies who die out of every 1000 born):

Africans	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
69 (urban) 282 (rural)	13	62	24

Doctors:

Africans	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
1:19,000	1:330	1:12,000	1:730

(Information from Bigelow, Wm., Strangers in Their Own Country)

Apartheid: The Cornerstones

• First, there are the **homelands**, or **bantustans**, areas of land where the black people are supposed to live. But they're not really big enough to grow food for all the black people, so many people, especially the men, are forced to go to work in the mines for low pay, or to the cities to work as servants. Until recently, people were only allowed to leave the bantustans if they had a pass, showing that they were hired by white people and had to live in a "white area." This law has now been changed.

Hmmm... if you take people's land away, they don't have much choice. They have to work for the white people! That's what the colonialists did.

• Second, there is **white control of voting**. Black people can't vote. And until they can, apartheid will still exist. Nelson Mandela — released after 28 years in prison, represents the ANC (African National Congress), which has struggled since 1912 for a non-racial South Africa, where people of all races can vote, and can live where they want to.

Homelands:
a nice name for reserves

The homelands — or bantustans — aren't very big — 13.4% of South Africa. Yet 72.5% of the population is expected to live on them. That's like squeezing most of the population of Canada into an area one-sixth the size of B.C. Because there are so many people on such small bits of land (most of which is very poor farmland), the land has become more and more exhausted. About 50,000 children a year die of malnutrition in the homelands. Often, the men leave the homelands to look for work.

The 'homelands' of South Africa

From AFRICA IN CRISIS by Lloyd Timberlake
Published by Earthscan Publications Ltd., London

South Africa Abroad

South Africa affects the lives not only of the Africans in its borders, but Africans living in other Southern African countries, too.

Namibia

Until November 1989, South Africa had a colony, Namibia, which it took over from the Germans after World War I. Although the United Nations repeatedly demanded free elections for Namibia, South Africa refused to get out. Finally, as international pressure mounted, South Africa agreed to grant Namibia independence.

BUT

South Africa didn't turn over Walvis Bay, Namibia's only port, so Namibia is still — to some extent — under the thumb of South Africa.

SADCC Countries

SADCC (South African Development Coordination Conference)

The SADCC countries are the nine countries surrounding (and surrounded by) South Africa — Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These countries are all dependent on South Africa for things like energy, transportation, and food, and they are struggling to become more independent. To keep them dependent, South Africa has done a number of things:

- cut off supplies and energy
- supported anti-government fighters
- attacked cities where they suspect ANC organizers might be hiding.

This has led to extreme hardship for some of South Africa's neighbours. In Mozambique and Angola, South Africa supports rebels who attack farms, villages, schools and health clinics. It is estimated that 735,000 people — many of them children — have been killed in these attacks, and many more injured. However, the SADCC countries, despite these hardships, are gradually building independent telecommunications, energy and transportation systems. Slowly, they are overcoming the effects of colonialism, and gaining real independence.

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Continuing Colonialism — Case 2

11 neo-colonialism

Big business steps in and carries on where the colonialists left off

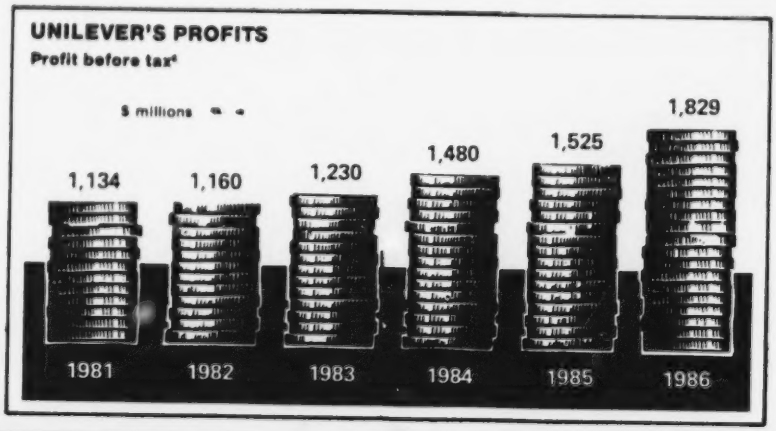
Colonialism may be over, but a lot of the big European and North American companies that became rich through colonialism still go on as if nothing had changed. Businesses like this, with branches in many different countries, are often called multi-national corporations (MNCs), or trans-national corporations (TNCs).

An African Soap Opera: The Fortunes of Unilever

If you use Lifebuoy Soap, eat Bird's Eye peas, drink PG Tips tea, sip Lipton's soup, or brush with Close Up toothpaste, you're buying from one of the largest companies in the world — Unilever. Unilever has branches and offices in 75 countries, it employs 300,000 people, and in 1986 it made $1.8 billion, before taxes.

And where did William Lever get his big start? In Africa! In 1911, Lever got a lease on 750,000 hectares of palm-bearing land in the Belgian Congo. He called it "Leverville". Through buying up other companies, Lever gained control of a huge "super-company" — the United Africa Company — in 1929. This company bought up (at cheap prices) 60% of BritishWest Africa's palm oil, 60% of their peanuts, 50% of their cocoa, and 45% of their palm kernel. By getting together with other companies, Lever was able to keep the prices paid to the African farmers very low.

Now, the king of the soap-suds (Lux, Pears, Sunlight, Lifebuoy, Lux — to name but a few) was ready to expand into other areas. Unilever grows carnations in Kenya to ship by air to markets in Europe. In 1984, Unilever bought the Brooke Bond tea company, and gained huge tea plantations in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa and India. It is now the world's largest tea producer. In 1985, the Unilever company Brooke Bond paid its Indian tea pickers $1.20 per day.



Unilever is an expert on substitutions; if one set of farmers starts to demand more money, Unilever is all set to substitute a different kind of oil or product for the one they're growing. It's a good way to keep the prices down — and the profits up.

Information from New Internationalist, June 1987

Illustration: New Internationalist

MNC's: A new kind of colonialism?

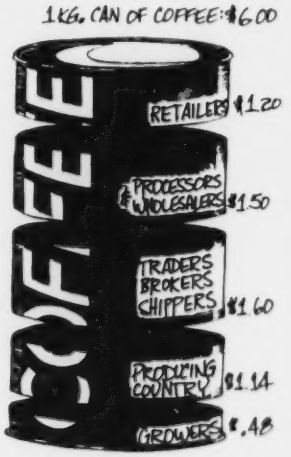
MNC's, eh? Sound like they have a great set up . . . cheap African labour, cheap African crops — you can make a good profit. Reminds me of the good old days.

Well, we've got our independence, but not much seems to have changed. Our children still starve while our land is used by multi-national companies to grow crops for the rich world.

Playing Fair

Ever since 1973, the developing countries of the world have been asking for a fairer world trading system, so that they can get high enough prices for their commodities to give their people a decent life, and so that the western world will buy some of their manufactured items. This idea of fair world trade is called the NIEO — New International Economic Order. So far, it's never got anywhere. The giant companies of the world — backed up by European and North American governments — are happy with things the way they are.

This new kind of colonialism is sometimes called **neo-colonialism**.



Look carefully at where the money goes from a kilo of coffee. The breakdown on soap would be similar; palm oil farmers don't make much on their oil. Why do you think the prices for palm oil or coffee are so low? What could be done to improve the situation?

Illustration by Howard Saunders, Food First

Because African countries are in so much debt, the First World is now insisting that African countries export even more of their crops to try to pay back the debt.

The result: 10,000 African children die every day from malnutrition or lack of health care.

Continuing Colonialism — Case 3

12 back home

In which we investigate our own ex-colony, Canada

Gee, am I ever glad we don't have to worry about colonialism in Canada!
Well think again. What happened in Africa wasn't so different from what happened in Canada.

"We criticize the racism in South Africa. Why can't we deal here with the problems we criticize them for . . .? We have no reason to criticize anybody else. We have no examples to show the world."
—George Erasmus, Assembly of First Nations, 1989

Before the White People

The native people of North America lived for hundreds of years in close harmony with the land. There was sometimes hardship, and there were sometimes wars between Indian nations. But generally, they were well-fed, well-housed and healthy.

The Beothuk

When John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland in 1497, there were an estimated 500 Beothuk people. They were skilled canoeists, hunters and fishers. They used birch bark to make cooking pots and shelters. What happened to them? Read page 31.

The Iroquois

The League of the Iroquois, who lived in the Eastern part of Canada and the U.S., included the Mohawks and many other peoples. They worked together on the land, and hunted together, dividing the catch among members of the village. Houses were shared by several families. A French Jesuit priest who met the Iroquois in the 1650s wrote this:

> ***"No poorhouses are needed among them, because they are neither mendicants nor paupers . . . . Their kindness, humanity and courtesy not only makes them liberal with what they have, but causes them to possess hardly anything except in common."***

The Iroquois also maintained law and order without a police system or jails. They had no written language, but passed on their history and culture orally.

What happened when the white people arrived?

Grabbing the Land

"It is asked whether a nation may lawfully take possession of some part of a vast country in which there are none but erratic nations, whose scanty population is incapable of occupying the while? . . . Their unsettled habitation in those immense regions, cannot be accounted a true and legal possession, and the people of Europe, too closely pent up at home, finding land of which the Savages stood in no particular need, and of which they made no actual and constant use, were lawfully entitled to take possession of it and to settle it with Colonies." — quote from Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada, 1845

How we got the land

Killing off the Indians:

In 1829, the last Beothuk, Nancy Shawnadithit, died. What happened to the rest? They were hunted by the white settlers and killed.

But what about all those warlike Indians — scalping people and that sort of thing?

Time and time again, it was whites who massacred villages of Indians. And as for scalping, it was George III of England who offered a cash reward for each Indian scalp — man, woman, or child — brought in as proof of a "kill".

Making Treaties:

Most Indian people, like African people, didn't want to sign over their land. Like the Africans, they weren't used to thinking of land as something you could own. But they were pressured by the white settlers to accept trade goods—guns, whisky, beads — for their land. Sometimes they were tricked, because what they discussed and agreed to was not what was written down. Harold Cardinal, a Canadian Indian, says this:

"The truth of the matter is that the Canadian Indians simply got swindled. Our forefathers got taken by slick-talking, fork-tongued cheats. It wasn't their fault ... treachery was new to them. They were accustomed to trusting another man's word, even an enemy's."

Just Moving on In:

In British Columbia, many native people never signed treaties; their land was simply taken from them. Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, arriving to set up a sawmill on land which was used by the Alberni Indians of Vancouver Island, simply told them to get off; he'd bought this land from the Queen of England. He told the chief that the English settlers who followed him would pay them for their land. The chief replied: "We do not wish to sell our land nor our water; let your friends stay in their own country." But the people of Alberni, like native people all over Canada, ended up on reserves, small chunks of land set aside for them.

"The purpose of the reservation system is to reduce the wild beasts [the Indians] to the condition of supplicants for charity."

— Frances Walker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872

Graphic by Carlos Freire, from Getting Started on Social Analysis in Canada, Czerny & Swift, Between the Lines. Reprinted by permission.

But all that's water under the bridge. I mean, it's not as if Indians are any different from the rest of Canadians now.

Life & Death Figures

average life expectancy:

White South African: 68
Black South African: 55
Canadian Average: 75.5
Native Indian Canadian Average: 70

infant mortality:

White South African: 12 deaths per 1000 babies
Black South African in homelands :
200 deaths per 1000 babies
Canadian Average: 7.9 deaths per 1000 babies
Native Indian: 17.2 deaths per 1000 babies

teen suicide:

Native people between the ages of 15 and 24 are 5 to 6 times more likely to commit suicide than non-natives.

homely facts:

One-third of reserve homes have no running water. Nearly 40% of reserve homes have no central heating.

the vote

Canada's Native People got the right to vote in 1948.

Native People and Their Lands

Even now, Indian people are being pushed aside from their lands.

When is a Reserve Not Reserved?

Northern Manitoba, 1964:

The reservation of the Cree people of the Chemawawin reserve is right where the Manitoba government wants to build a giant hydroelectric dam. Their reserve is flooded; they are forced to move. Up until then, the people of Chemawawin were doing well. Since then, they have faced economic and social disaster.

Northern Quebec, 1990:

The Cree Indians are fighting Phase II of the James Bay Electric project, a giant dam located on Cree land which will provide electricity for Quebec and parts of the U.S. Phase I has resulted in disappearance of wildlife, icing up of rivers, disruption of native life. Phase II is expected to go ahead, despite Cree protest.

Losing Airspace

Labrador, 1990

The Innu people of Labrador have had a few unwelcome visitors lately: low-level NATO jets. The NATO planes fly 7,500 flights a year over Innu land in Labrador. Sometimes they go as low as 30 metres, creating noise which is far above the pain level for both people and animals. The Innu say that their whole way of life is being destroyed by the flights. The government response is to up the number of flights to 20,000 in 1991.

Seems like, whenever native people stand in the way of "white" progress, the Indians get shoved aside!

For Native Canadians, the 500 years since Columbus arrived in America have been bitter ones.

"Our message for 1992 is simple: 'For First Nations to celebrate the near destruction of our culture and identity would be insane.' The concepts we associate with Columbus' voyage are . . . invasion, conquest, colonization, assimilation and genocide . . . ."

— Assembly of First Nations

So what if there hadn't been any colonialism?

Well, the world might be set up differently. Maybe the rich countries would be poorer, and the poor countries would be richer. And then there's the environment. One thing the Europeans brought with them was a "grab-all-you-can" attitude about the earth, and that's led to a lot of problems!

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Chief Seattle, 1854

Graphic from Oxfam Bother Magazine, number 74

Graphic: Carlos Freire

Activities

13 hands on

Now that we've read all about it, let's use what we know

1492: Celebration or Disaster?

All Chapters

In 1992, Spain is hosting an International Exposition to celebrate the discovery of America by Columbus. Expo '92 will be held in Seville, the city where Columbus shipped the first 500 Indians as slaves. Canada has budgetted $33 million dollars for Canadian participation in the event. There are different points of view about Canada's participation.

Take one of the following roles, and prepare to speak on a panel discussing this question: Should Canada participate in Expo '92?

- **Eduardo de Silva**, one of the Spanish organizers of the event: You are proud of the part which Columbus played in the development of the world. Columbus may have been ruthless, but he was also a brave explorer and an advanced navigator, and you are glad to see his achievements recognized. This event will also enhance the international status of your country; after all, it was the king and queen of Spain who financed his voyages to the New World.

- **Suzanne Smith**, one of the members of the Canadian Trade Commission: You would like to increase Canada's trade with Europe, and this fair is a good opportunity to do that. As far as you can see, the only people who are complaining are a handful of belly-achers who don't understand the importance of trade to increasing Canada's wealth.

- **Marie Lightfeather**, a Cree Indian: Many of the native Indian programs were slashed in the last federal budget. The northern native magazine for which you worked has folded because the government has withdrawn its funding, and funding for native university students has also been cut. You wonder why the government doesn't have enough money to improve the lives of its first people, but it has $33 million to spend on Expo '92, which celebrates the beginning of colonialism, and the end of the native way of life.

- **Joe Sawatsky**, an environmental activist: You are horrified that Canada would even consider celebrating the arrival of Columbus to the new world. As far as you are concerned, the greed and exploitation that Columbus and the Europeans brought with them have caused most of the environmental problems which the world now faces today.

Discussion: This simulation can be used as a small-group activity, with groups of 5 students, one being a chair. Alternatively, the entire class can be divided into groups representing each role, choosing a speaker to represent them and feeding their speaker with ideas, or taking turns being the speaker.
Writing: Students can take one or all of these roles and produce a written argument. The teacher might then want to choose students to present their arguments orally.

Media Story: New World Discovery

Chapter 1

- It's 1492, and Columbus is just setting foot on the island of Guanahaní, which he names San Salvador. Write a news report on this event, including interviews with Columbus, his men, and some of the Arawak "Indians" whom they met.
- It's 1592, and things have changed on Guanahaní. Trees have been cut down to make way for sugar cane plantations. Very few Arawaks are around; the fields are being worked by African slaves, superintended by a few Spaniards with whips. Write a second news report, interviewing the people who you meet on the first centenary of Columbus' landing. [If your class has access to video equipment, you may want to do these interviews as "live" newscasts.]

Africa's Civilizations

Chapter 2

In your school or public library, find out all the information you can about one of Africa's ancient civilizations. Then produce a travel brochure aimed at early travellers. What kinds of buildings, crafts, trading goods, animals, and other interesting things will they find? How is the society organized? (Is there a king, important noblemen, a queen or other important woman?) What is the religion like? What are the people like? Try to make your brochure as informative as possible. You might want to draw some pictures to make it more attractive to potential tourists! [Some of the names of kingdoms which you may want to look up: Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Ife, Benin, Ethiopia, Axum, Nubia, Kush, Zimbabwe, Egypt]

Racism

Chapters 3-4

In the 16th century, when slavery started, black people were not considered inferior to white people. There were white slaves, too (the word "slave" comes from the slavic region of Eastern Europe, where many slaves were taken to work for Western Europeans). But in the next few centuries, Europeans began to change their thinking. Write a story about a young Virginia farmer, about the feelings he has when he buys his first slaves, about some of the experiences and feelings he has, and about how he begins to justify slavery by a growing racism.

or

Look around your school, your community, your country for signs of racism. Interview a number of people to find out what they think about people of different races. When people are racist, where do you think they get their ideas? How do you think racism got started? (Read page 9) Then write an article about your findings.

Why Colonialism?

Chapter 5

This is the BBC . . .

Pretend you are a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) reporter in England in 1884. The Berlin African Conference is just about to begin. What you want to investigate is this: Why are all these European countries taking over Africa? Read pages 10 to 12, then write up a broadcast including interviews with different British people of the time — a factory owner, a politician, an explorer, a missionary, for instance — in which we will learn why Britain decided to get involved in African colonialism.

Chapters 3-7

The Growing Gap

In 1500, Europeans and Africans had a similar standard of living (see page 5). In 1990, the average income in Canada is 17 times as high as the average income in Africa. Look at the question on the bottom of page 5: "What happened between 1500 and now to make Africa so poor and Europe and North America so rich?" Read chapters 3 to 7, then write on one of the following topics:

- How the slave trade made Africa poor.
- How colonialism made Africa poor.

Chapter 3

The 3-Way Trade

Read Chapter 3, on the 3-way slave trade. Then imagine that you're a sailor on one of the British ships of the 16th century. Your ship starts out from Bristol, in England, filled with guns, cloth and beads, headed for West Africa. From there you will go on to the Caribbean with your ship filled with slaves, and from there back to England with sugar and rum. Write a log, or diary, describing your experiences as a sailor.

Thinking Ahead on Colonialism

Chapter 7

Read the 7 "problems" introduced to Africa by colonialism in Chapter 7. At the bottom of each problem is a question, asking you to think about how this problem may make things difficult for Africa later on. In small groups, discuss each question, decide on a possible answer, and then write it down. When you've finished, look at pages 21 to 24, and see how close your answers were to the points made on those pages. (You may have thought of some other good points, too.)

Picture It!

Chapters 5-7

In a group or alone, make a large poster on colonialism in Africa. You may want to divide your paper into squares, like a comic strip, and illustrate how colonialism got started, what reaction it met, and how the colonialists ruled their African colonies. You'll probably want to have some printing or writing on your poster to help explain what's going on.

Chapters 5-7

South/North Drama

In groups of two, plan and rehearse a short skit showing a meeting between a colonial administrator of the early 1900s, and a young African of today. Have each sincerely try to present his/her view of the benefits/damages of colonialism to the other.

Chapters 6, 7, 12

Civilization

The British poet Rudyard Kipling wrote some famous lines in which he described the "white man's burden" — the sense that the Europeans must spread a certain type of civilization to the "new-caught, sullen peoples" of the world (see page 13).

Think about what it means to be "civilized", from Kipling's point of view, from an African or Native Indian point of view, and then from your own point of view. Make up a chart entitled "civilized people". Include 3 columns for the 3 points of view, and fill in at least 5 points in each.

Colonial Quotes

Chapters 5-7

"I have the duty to help save the heathen from damnation, wean them from their perversity, and open the gates to a Christian civilisation."
— Mary Slessor, Scottish missionary in West Africa

"Why do I regard the British rule as a curse? It has impoverished the people by a system of progressive exploitation and a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford. It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture."
—Gandhi, 1930

"The foreign investors did not in fact take away from African tribesmen a form of wealth which they had previously enjoyed....The mining companies created a new form of enterprise; they mined ores which communities such as the Lamba and Lala could not have exploited with the technological means available to tribal society."
— Gann and Duignan, ***The Burden of Empire***

"Law and order is perhaps the most important advantage that we British gave to our colonies. People could go about their daily lives without fear of attack by others. Also our nation's record in abolishing slavery is a commendable fact.

We took the ideals of liberty, equality, justice and democracy to the colonies. With these came the advantages of civilisation closely followed by the benefits of technology."
— British Colonial Administrator, quoted in Cooke, D., ***Teaching Development Issues: Colonialism***

"Europeans exploited the rich natural resources of Africa. They used the wealth they obtained from mining diamonds, gold, copper, and iron ore to develop their colonies economically."
— Burton F. Beers, ***Patterns of Civilization***, Vol. 2, text for Grade 9 Social Studies in B.C.

"Existence for the colonial people under imperialist rule means their economic and political exploitation . . . ."
— Kwame Nkrumah, later the first President of Ghana

"History books do not tell history from the native perspective. What they do is perpetuate the excuse for the domination saying that it was necessary to destroy the Indians in order to expand the Empire."
— Greg Staats, Mohawk from Brantford, Ontario

"We come among them [the Africans] as members of a superior race and servants of a Government that desires to elevate the more degraded portions of the human family." — David Livingstone, African Missionary

"We can extirpate these savages (North American Indians) in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth."
— Ben Franklin, father of American Confederation

In a small group, rank these quotations from the ones you most agree with, to the ones you least agree with. Be prepared to explain why you have ranked them the way you did.

Colonizing Capers

Chapters 5-7

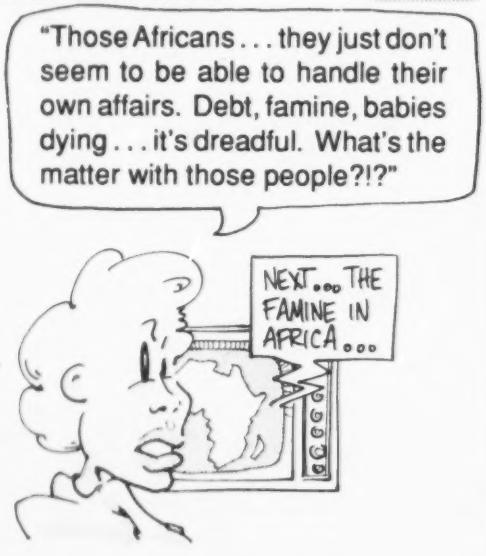
Make a gameboard to help players understand how colonialism works. You might want to make it like a Monopoly game, where the goal is to collect more and more land and wealth, or like a Snakes and Ladders game, where you've got to make your way through all kinds of difficult and helpful circumstances. You might want to do it from the point of view of a colonialist or an African, or have different players take different roles. Some of the types of things you could do are:

- Allow colonialists to buy up land at cheap prices
- Allow colonialists to charge a "hut tax" to anyone who lands on certain squares
- Have "African uprising" squares which set the colonialists back
- Have crop cards — a good crop means a little bit of money for the Africans, and lots of money for the colonialists
- Have ship tokens or cards, so that colonialists can save up and buy a ship, which will help them earn more money

You can probably think of many more!

Those Africans!

All Chapters


"Those Africans . . . they just don't seem to be able to handle their own affairs. Debt, famine, babies dying . . . it's dreadful. What's the matter with those people?!?"
NEXT... THE FAMINE IN AFRICA...

With a partner, write an imaginary conversation between a Canadian student and the woman in this cartoon, telling her some of the deep-rooted causes of Africa's present problems.

*** Clippings *** Clippings ***

Africa

All Chapters

Bring to school all the clippings you can find on Africa. Arrange them on a bulletin board or in a scrap book. Think about each clipping — has colonialism played a part in the situation being described? How? Write notes about the "colonial links" to each clipping on small pieces of paper and arrange them on or near the clipping.

South Africa

Chapter 10

South Africa is on the move! Collect as many clippings and articles as you can about South Africa. Keep note of the rapid changes being made there as modern-day colonialists are finally being pressured to change. A good film to watch about South Africa is ***Cry Freedom.***

After you've discussed the clipping and the film, draw up two 10-year prediction plans, like this:

Worst-Case Prediction

1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000

(You'll want to make yours much longer.)

Write in all the things that might happen if people aren't willing to change.

Best-Case Prediction

1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000

Write in all the things that might happen if people work together for positive change.

At the bottom of the page, answer these questions:

- Which of the predictions, or which combination of the two predictions, do you predict will actually happen, and why?
- What changes will need to happen in people's thinking, in the international scene, to make your best-case prediction come about?
- Are there any ways that Canadians can make a difference in this situation? that *you* can make a difference?

Neo-Colonialism & MNCs

viewpoints

Chapter 11

Are multi-national corporations a positive or a negative influence in the world? First, read pages 28 to 29, then think about the different **aspects** of this question:

aspects

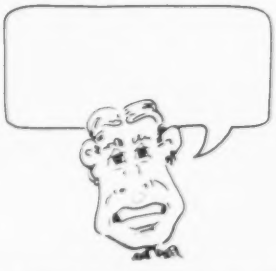
work — the job security of First World workers in a MNC (the company can always move to a Third World country where pay is much less)
land — needed by Africans
business — profits needed
environment — large amounts of carbon dioxide emitted in shipping goods long distances/ over-using the land in order to grow more crops (leading to desertification)
trade — prices for manufactured goods are high, but commodity prices are low
debt — getting higher, causing social programs such as education and health to be cut
profits — brings high rate of return for investors

Now, think about viewpoints. What viewpoint is each of these people likely to have on MNCs? Fill in each thought balloon with what that person is likely to think about multi-national corporations.

- MNC executive

- African politician

- Canadian worker



- Canadian Environmentalist

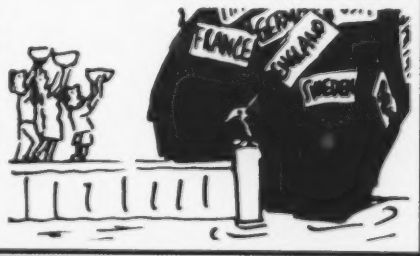
- Landless African

- Canadian Banker, who has lent money to Africa

Cash cropping

Chapters 9 & 11

Look at the cartoon in the bottom right corner of page 29. What is the cartoonist trying to say about the export of commodities? Imagine that you are the prime minister of a newly-independent African country. You are determined to change the cash-crop situation around. Write the speech you will deliver in parliament, laying out the steps by which your nation will become more self-sufficient, and less dependent on cash crops.



Colonialism & the Earth

Chapter 12

"He (whiteman) kidnaps the earth . . . his appetite will devour the earth . . . continue to contaminate in your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste."

— excerpt from Chief Seattle's speech, 1854

" . . . we, the Native Aboriginal People of this land
are the first and still the best teachers
about ecology.
And how to take care of our Earth Mother
and all that lives on her.

We, the Native People of this land
have never willingly or mindlessly destroyed this land for profit or any other reason
because it belongs only to the one who created it."

— Keesheanakwat Art Solomon
Canadian Ojibway Elder

Read page 33, then, in small groups, brainstorm and list several ways in which environmental degradation might be considered the result of colonialism.

Land

Chapter 12

Whose land is it? Invite a Native person to your class to give their view of the Indian land claim question. Invite or write to your Member of Parliament and MLA to see what his or her stand is on this issue. Then look back at the 10-year Prediction Plans on page 37 (South Africa). Use the same method and the same questions to think of a ten-year prediction on Indian land claims.

The Big ?

All Chapters

If nations had developed independently, without colonialism, how would the world be different today?

Brainstorm as many ideas as you can in class, then take one of the ideas and write a short article on it.

Resources on Colonialism

Audio-Visual

Roots of Hunger, Roots of Change (NFB 106C 0187 141, 28 minutes): This very current and thoughtful National Film Board film/video focuses on the reasons for rural poverty in Senegal, West Africa. It stresses the colonial roots of the problem of hunger, particularly the effects of a cash crop economy.

Days of Future Past (30 minutes): This video traces the colonial histories of three countries: Peru, Malaysia, and Niger, and shows some of the problems which each country has been left with. Days of Future Past is part of the Paths of Development series which has been placed in major public libraries across Canada by CIDA. For B.C. teachers, this video is also available through Image Media Services (formerly PEMC).

Print

Cooke, Dave. ***Teaching Development Issues: Colonialism.*** Manchester: Development Education Project, c/o Manchester Polytechnic, 801 Wilmslow Rd., Didsbury, Manchester, U.K. M20 8RG, 1986. *An excellent teaching resource on colonialism.*

Davidson, Basil. ***Africa: History of a Continent.*** New York, Macmillan Company, 1972
One of the world's greatest Africa scholars, Davidson has written many books on Africa, and transmits his enthusiasm in a lively, interesting style.

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